



SOCIALIST PARTY OF MICHIGAN MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2023 Workers of Michigan Unite!

Solidarity to the United Auto Workers!

In a summer of rising labor and strike activity, the eyes of the world are now turning to Michigan. The UAW (United Auto Workers) are engaging in a novel "stand up" strike campaign where workers will effectively shut down production on their employers at specific factories and job sites, known to strike coordinators and not to the bosses.

They are demanding a 40% wage increase- not an arbitrary number. It roughly coincides with the wage increases of "The Big 3" 's CEOs. It reveals an emergent class consciousness in a long staid union that has, at times, not made radical enough demands for its rank-and-file. They also are demanding an end to the two-tiered pay system that pits new workers and experienced workers against each other, and wages that will track with the rising cost of living.

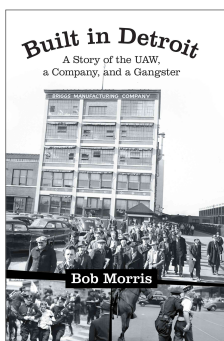
We also should take heart in the Union's evocation of the 1937 "sit-down" strikes, an appeal to some important and oft-forgotten labor history that had a seismic impact here in Michigan and around the country. The working class is remembering the fire of those who came before us, and bringing that energy to bear on a neoliberal status quo that sees those at the top making upwards of 300:1 on the wages of an average auto worker.

The Socialist Party of Michigan calls for social ownership and worker control of the automotive industry to make vehicles for the use and human need of workers and consumers, rather than private profit of a tiny few. We stand for the right of workers to reap the full value of their labor and all that they produce. The Socialist Party of Michigan further calls for publicly-funded universal healthcare for all, a 100% capital flight tax on plants and corporations that attempt to leave the state, and a 30-hour work week at no loss of pay or benefits. We support militant, united labor action including hot cargo agreements and boycotts, factory committees, secondary and sympathy strikes, sit-down strikes, general strikes, and ultimately the expropriation of workplaces. We encourage all UAW workers who agree with these demands to join us today!

The Socialist Party of Michigan lends our support and solidarity to the strike, and we encourage our members and fellow travelers to keep track of the strike and its needs. While the "stand up" tactic creates certain logistical difficulties in joining our fellow workers on the picket lines, there will be opportunities to support autoworkers in person and afar.

We encourage you to sign up for updates on the UAW website, and we will be providing material in the coming weeks that reports on the current strike, analyzes the class politics, and provides historical context for why this strike is so important.

Radical Recommendations

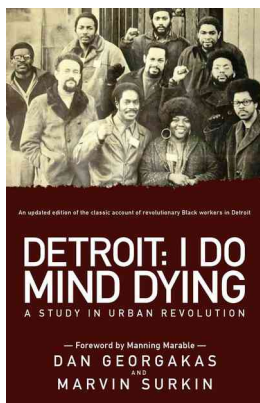


Built in Detroit: A Story of the UAW, a Company, and a Gangster by Bob Morris

Rich with personal and historical details, ***Built in Detroit**** narrates a story unique to Detroit. It tells the story of a thriving

city and the factories that gave the city life. Author Bob Morris deftly portrays many of the top labor leaders of the 1930s and 1940s, as well as the rank and file members who supported these labor leaders. It also provides portraits of early auto industrialists, their companies, their henchmen and the gangsters they hired to destroy the labor movement.

Detroit: I Do Mind Dying A Study in Urban Revolution
By Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin



Detroit: I Do Mind Dying tracks the extraordinary development of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement and the League of Revolutionary Black Workers as they became two of the landmark political organizations of the 1960s and 1970s. It is widely heralded as one the most important books on the black liberation movement. From **Haymarket Books**.**

UAW Through the Decades

A brief summary of the United Auto Workers union found on the UAW.org website.***

Workers Fighting Back: The UAW Goes on Strike! From Revolutionary Left Radio****

This podcast discusses the strike, explains the causes of the strike and the demands of the workers, the UAW union president Shawn Fain and the democratic election that put him in leadership, what this strike - and others like it - mean for the American working class, the importance of solidarity in the labor movement and beyond.

Congratulations to the Striking Writers of the Writer's Guild of America!

After a 148 day strike the corporations running the television and film industries ceded to the demands of the WGA in what they described as an “exceptional” deal. The new contract includes an increase in residual payments, higher compensation, better benefits, protections against artificial intelligence, and gains on data transparency and staffing minimums.

The success of the WGA strike reveals the type of power workers have when they band together, withhold their labor, and demand better working conditions. The steadfastness and ability for writers to put the squeeze on their corporate bosses bore the fruit of a contract that aligns with the majority of their demands.

In particular, as capitalists look to artificial intelligence as a way to squeeze out more profit and productivity from a shrinking workforce, we can all look to the example set by the WGA of how workers can position themselves to challenge the most exploitative uses of emerging technologies.

Events and Announcements

-The Western Michigan University Ethics Center is hosting conversations about Frantz Fanon's *Wretched of the Earth* in October (Wednesdays 4th, 11th, 18th, and 25th from 5:30-7 p.m.). Fanon's text is among the classic sources of the Black Radical Intellectual Tradition.

Please register at the WMU Ethics Center through the URL below:
<https://wmich.edu/ethics/events/book-clubs>

-Saturday, October 7th there will be a show at Papa Pete's in Kalamazoo at 9PM featuring the music of Katy Needs a Life, Von Kaiser, and DJ Danger Groove. 21+, \$5 Suggested Donation. Proceeds from the event will go to OutFront Kalamazoo, a local LGBTQ+ advocacy organization.

-The Rent is Too Damn High coalition is meeting weekly in Lansing at the Capitol building to continue demanding a renter's bill of rights, rent control, and more. Sign up for more info and updates [here](#). *****

*<https://www.builtindetroit.net/book/>

**<https://www.haymarketbooks.org/books/458-detroit-i-do-mind-dying>

***<https://uaw.org/members/uaw-through-the-decades/>

****<https://revolutionaryleftradio.libsyn.com/uaw-strikes-workers-fighting-back>

*****https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeL5ei9HWp_8ByV1r8m_wbzl-ziw1qenHGS77_UbmvYnZY6nw/viewform